

Reconciliation

By Fr Peter Little SJ

In this introduction to the sacrament of Reconciliation, and we're doing this on, what, the twenty first isn't it of March and we're in section three. Section one and two having been, Section One the mystery of reconciliation in the mystery of our salvation, and section two the reconciliation of penitents in the church's rite, that's where we covered the acts of the penitent being sorry. Saying it out, Making up. And then the act of the priest absolving. They are the things that make it, make up with the interior reality you might say of this sacrament. The necessity of it we dealt with. It's necessary when mortal sin has been committed. And it's great benefits are felt with its taken seriously as part and parcel of our lives now, in the confession of venial sins. Now the offices and ministries in the reconciliation, and this has got one, two, three, four sections in it. First the community in the celebration of penance. You can understand this material [1.01] I think on the basis on what I might have mentioned before. If you take a sin like say the refusal to take part in the mass, and then somebody is very sorry. Then you can easily see that a human way of doing it, would be, if he comes into the church at mass and at an appropriate time stands up. And everybody knows perfectly well that this man, prominent person hasn't been going to mass. Now that's an insult to them, to the church. Does damage to the church. Wounded socially because of the bad example. Internally it does damage to the church, because the man is not in a state of grace. So he harms the reality of the

church. So he stands up and says, "brothers, I am awfully sorry for what I've been doing over the last ten years or something. And I am sorry before God and I wish you to pray for me. And as I ask pardon from you and receive it from you through the bishop, I want you to join with him in praying for me." And the bishop [2.00] then does his part you see. That was the way in which, you see, you'd be in a position next Sunday and for the rest of your life of it being unthinkable that you should start carrying on like that again because you've told everybody how sorry you are. And supposing next Sunday comes and you're still, oh well, everybody in the whole town then would look at you and say, "isn't that strange. Last Sunday you said how sorry you were and here you are back at it again." You can see how strong an influence that would be to keep him in his good resolutions. So that's the role of the community as we've explained, the whole church as a priestly people acts in different ways in the work of reconciliation which has been entrusted to it by the Lord. So that's a little correction or deepening of what we normally think oh we just think the priest forgives you your sins and that's it. Now that's not wrong, but that's not the full image that Our Lord has of how reconciliation is to occur. [3.01] Not only does the church call sinners to repentance by preaching the word of God. But it also intercedes for sinners and helps penitents with maternal care and solicitude to acknowledge and admit their sins and so obtain the mercy of God who alone can forgive sins. Furthermore, the church becomes the instrument of the conversion, that's the turning back to God, and the absolution of the penitent. This is very perhaps an unusual way, for us, of hearing the church teaching us. You see, the church says that the church, that the church herself, the church is the instrument. Now remember the church is the bishop, his priests, his deacons, and all the people there. Now it says the church, that means all of them, the church is the instrument [4.00] of the

forgiving. The church becomes the instrument of the conversion and the absolution of the penitent through the ministry entrusted by Christ to the apostles and their successors. The church has that ministry, but it's only entrusted for its high point of action to certain persons in the church. Now you see you have to get that rather clear. It means everybody has some role to play. And that's what we're quite unused to thinking about. It may be we used to think to, we may be used to it in actual fact, you see. Lay people often prod one another and say, "Why don't you behave yourself." Working men have sometimes told me that when they've got some fellow who doesn't ... think, why don't you behave yourself, why don't you go up to the priest and tell them etcetera, etcetera. Because they're at him all the time, they do it. Well there's the charity of the church, you see, urging him all the time. [5.01] But those fellows would never think of it as the church in them acting with charity towards the sinner, but that's what it is. And so this doctrine simply makes clearly to us what a lot of people do. How often devotions and so on, I remember reading an article ... letters would come in to that devotion of the perpetual novena. And there'd be letters to Our Lady, "Please bring about the conversion of somebody or thank you for the conversion of somebody, so people pray a lot for one another that they may be converted so that's the church acting through them. But then the church acts through her special ministry. So there are offices and ministries. So that's a little bit subtle. It has to be got fairly clear because when I was in Rome in a better world, the theory was put out in this group of sixty people or however many we were by a priest that everybody has the power to reconcile [6.03] So why should it be confined to priests? Why can't the father, husband reconcile his wife that was being troubled. And Timothy at the end, I mean John put up his hand and said afterwards, look I've always been taught that the actual forgiveness was only given to the

apostles, and so to bishops and priests. And the whole assembly turned on me and said, “Oh no”. So that’s what’s going on in America you see. You don’t know those Americans. That was 1971, so imagine matters right now. They assume everybody can do it. Just as it’s beginning to crop up that anybody radically can celebrate the eucharist. If there was absolute for it need anybody could do it. But errors crop in and crop up all the time, so its an error based upon the truth that the whole church is certainly involved by Christ’s will in the reconciliation of sinners. But in a [7.00] carefully distinguished way.

{Minister of The Sacrament}

So the next section is the minister of the sacrament. The church exercises the ministry of the sacrament of penance through bishops and presbyters. By preaching God’s word they call the faithful to conversion in the name of Christ, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, they declare and grant the forgiveness of sins. In the exercise of this ministry, presbyters act in communion with the bishop, and share in his power and office of regulating the penitential discipline. That’s why we must have the permission of the local bishop to forgive sins. If I waltzed into another diocese and pretended to forgive sins nothing happens. It’s invalid. I mean I don’t want to go into the whole thing, there are cases where it can be valid. But the structure of it is you see that the King, the Lord gives [8.00] his pardon and power to the apostles, and they must administer it. Therefore they regulate it. They regulate who you can forgive. Some sins, some sinners can’t be forgiven by the presbyters. Other sinners can’t be forgiven by the bishops. There are (fore) sinners (or par) who can only be forgiven by the pope. But then, there’s another law that enables the papal absolving power to be exercised by bishops and presbyters in emergency situations provided the pope is told about it. All those things are there. In other words, the church regulates it.

Funny things can occur to people minds when they don't understand all this. When we were novices we had a book on our table that had a lot of that information in it. And it listed the various forms of excommunication. Well they vary in their intensity. And some are, some excommunications [9.00] are reserved to the pope or the bishop and there's a list of excommunications reserved to nobody. And one of the novices said my Godfather that's pretty awful isn't it! Nobody can deal with it. What it meant was that any priest could deal with it. It wasn't reserved to the bishop, that any priest could have dealt with it. So there, he completely misread what the phrase meant. The competent minister of the sacrament of penance is a priest who has the faculty, that's the permission you see, to absolve in accordance with canon law. All priest however, even though non-proved, can hear confessions, absolve rather than the all (emblicitly) licitly all penitents who are in danger of death. So you have many priests who have abandoned their ministry. Or many priests who have been legitimately excused from their ministry. Now any of them in an emergency can validly and licitly absolve anybody from anything. It's a great thing. [10.02] Anybody, as long as he's a priest. The church surprising the jurisdiction on the spot to do it, of course, there are other laws coming in with priests absolve others and they are themselves in a state of serious sin. For them that is a mortal sin of sacrilege to do that you see. So you were, I mean there are other laws governing you see it's not an automatic kind of business. He would absolve validly and licitly but unless he put himself into a good condition. Some priests who've abandoned the ministry and to hell with it all. He's in a state of mortal sin, he should if he's going to absolve somebody. He should say, "Oh my God I am very sorry for all my sins, and then absolve but even if he didn't it would be still valid and licit. Got anything to say now. {someone else talking} You see, you're a priest forever, you see [11.00] You're always a priest no

matter what happens to you, no matter what you do. {someone else talking} Oh well you've got to be, you're exercising the king's jurisdiction. You can't be dis, you shouldn't be displeasing to the king when you're acting in his name. It doesn't make sense. {someone else talking}. These are all, you see the great thing is (sung per sung pay) Holy things are to be treated in a holy fashion. We'd be the holiest things on Earth see. {someone else talking} He'd commit a few, he'd commit another sin then, sin against charity you see then. Caught no matter what he'd do. Anyway you've got the point anyway {someone else talking} [12.00] What Our Lord means is that, "I hold them in my hands and nobody can take them away from me," of course, the person themselves can kick over the faith, but Our Lord is simply saying (pen sing there) that he is the same God as his father because nobody can, obviously, even you know that he'd sat to them, "nobody can take anything away from my father. If he's got them, and nobody can take them from me. Because in this matter my father and I are one." Anyway that's not to do with this so much. Well now, what about the second point, the pastoral exercise of this ministry. In order to fulfil his ministry [13.00] properly and faithfully, the confessor should understand the disorders of souls and apply the appropriate remedies to them. He should fulfil his office of judge wisely. And should acquire the knowledge and prudence necessary for this task by serious study. We have to study for years to know how to do things, guided by the teaching authority of the church and especially by fervent prayer to God. Discernment of spirits is a deep knowledge of God's action in the hearts of men. It is a gift of the spirit as well as the fruit of charity. So that laying on the line for all the bishops and priests. It's not a mechanical kind of operation, you see, which was the great heresy of the time of the reformation. But it didn't matter what the priests were like. All they did was to tell the penitent that God had forgiven them. And that's still the protestant

approach. That's all wrong you see. Given. Our Lord has entrusted a ministry [14.00] of royal, judicial, medicinal action, all to be carried out with great love towards human beings. Therefore, the person doing it must understand what the situation, as any doctor must understand, as any judge must understand and as any, they're the two things. He is in one sense a doctor, therefore we must understand what people are suffering from when they sin. And he's a judge he must be able to judge the situation that people are in. And to do that he needs the gift of the Holy Spirit, and a great lot of love towards people plus knowledge and prayer. So it's quite a thing. The confessor should be always ready and willing to hear the confessions of the faithful when they make a reasonable request. Doesn't mean you've got to do it, even if any time anybody comes. You see, it's got to be reasonable, that's why they have hours for confession. [15.02] by receiving the repentance they are now leading into the life of the truth. The confessor fills a paternal function. He reveals the heart of the father himself, and shows the image of Christ the good shepherd. We should keep in mind that he has been entrusted with the ministry of Christ who mercifully accomplished the saving work of man's redemption. And who is present by his power in the sacraments. You see what a noble function it is. You are visibly manifesting God the father and God the son to be to the person concerned. As the minister of God, the confessor comes to know the secrets of another's conscience and he is bound to keep it the sacramental seal of confession absolutely inviolate. That means, in actual fact, you may never tell say that Johnny told me that he had disobeyed his mother. If you did that, that sin is so serious, [16.00] that only the pope can forgive it. You're allowed even to say that I've heard people telling me that they don't go to mass on Sundays. You're not allowed to say that. That's by another law. The seal of the sacrament is you may never say that that person told you a sin, or

make it obvious without naming him that somebody did it. But by an extra law, you may never say that you've heard any sins in the sacrament. In the old days, the missionaries used to say, "Well, some man came to me and he told me forty years he'd been doing this. The church says you're not to do that. It's too important. {someone else speaking; after the holidays even the children who go to catholic schools, a percentage of them haven't been to mass since the school broke up. And then he said what would it be amongst those children who don't go? ... }

Oh well it all depends. He didn't say who went to confession. Now you can't say that in the sacrament you've heard [17.00] people telling you this sin or that sin. That's not breaking the seal of the confessional, but it's disobedience to the church if you do. It's a fairly new law that one. But the seal of confession has always been there you see {someone else speaking You say that you can't say that that person hasn't been to confession in a while} Well it all. No normally you can't no. You must never, the general law is you must never do anything that would in the slightest way embarrass anybody or make it more difficult for anybody to come to the sacrament. So all the laws are in view of that. For the person, see it's a public thing everybody knows Bill Smith went to confession, they saw him go. So but it generally means in cases of law and all that, that's when you (keep mum) about it. Father did this man, did this man come to you to confession on Saturday Night? I don't know. [18.00] They say you do know, you surely know the man you know him well. Of course I know him well, but I don't know if he came to me to confession, meaning of course I know, but I'm not going to tell you, in a law court, because you might use it as some kind of evidence that the man is a murderer, and he told me that he murdered John Smith. {someone else made mention of a suspect telling a priest that he

murdered someone in Melbourne last year} That's right, well that's a case where you'd never say anything, that's right you'd never say anything. Of course the person can give you permission you see. But then he'd have to make it crystal clear you see. Normally that's very exceptional. Now the penitent, he's got a ministry. The acts of the penitent, in the celebration of the sacrament, are of the greatest importance that's pretty clear. When with proper dispositions he approaches this saving remedy instituted by Christ and confesses his sins he shares by his actions in the sacrament itself. [19.01] The sacrament is completed when the words of absolution are spoken by the minister in the name of Christ. Thus the faithful Christian as he experiences and proclaims the mercy of God in his life, celebrates with the priest the liturgy by which the church continually renews itself. Now whoever thought that that was said (sad). Now even I don't think of that when I go to confession see, but I should. The faithful Christian, as he experiences and proclaims the mercy of God in his life. See at the end of the new sacramental ritual, the priest says, "give thanks to the Lord for his goodness," and you have to say, "And his mercy endures forever." You've got to proclaim the mercy of God. Sometimes the priest will say, "Go now and proclaim," now let's see it there, "Go in peace and proclaim to the world, the wonderful works of God who has brought you salvation." [20.00] So you could say, "I've just been to confession, and God has had mercy on me." See, that's proclaiming the wonderful works of God. You're not saying I've felt that Jesus is my own personal saviour, see, that's the Protestant way of doing it. Puts us all on edge you see. No we say, "I've been to confession."

"What did you do?"

"No I'm not telling you what I did."

“But I’ve been to confession, and God forgave me all my sins through the priest. Isn’t he good”

So, as he experiences; You hear the priest saying, “I forgive you all your sins.” And you say, “Well that’s nice.” And proclaims you are then celebrating the liturgy with the priest. And it’s a liturgy which the church continually renews itself. So there’s an interesting point. We hear all these renewal weekends and everything. But the church uses that word very much explicitly in connection with this sacrament.

{Celebration of the Sacrament}

Now the celebration of the sacrament, so that leads into this next section. [21.00] The place of it, the time of it, and the vestments to be used, cause its liturgical public worship. The sacrament of penance is celebrated in the place, and the location prescribed by law. Now that caused all the problems in the world, that one sentence. Insayday Inloco. That means that places are to be set aside, and they’re already covered in law. So the church doesn’t repeat them all here, and they’re very strict. See, you can’t hear women’s confessions outside of the confessional. If you do they’re invalid. The nuns, anyhow, they’re invalid, see. So all sorts of rules, you don’t have to bother about them, but the, I should have said that’s the hearing of religious women. If you don’t hear confessions of religious women in the place publicly appointed for it, unless there is question of sickness and illness, then they’re invalid, they’re not just illicit. [22.00] see if you disobey the church’s laws that’s illicit, you’re acting illegally. That’s serious or venial sin according to the intensity or the strength of the law. But the church controls it so much, that you can do it and nothing happens. See it’s invalid. Now normally all are to be heard in the place, that is the place set aside

for this sacrament. However, if there's a proper reason for it, the confessions of men can be heard anywhere, if there's a proper reason. But not ... for the women must always be there, and must always be a separation wall or grill. Now sometimes it's overdone, people put curtains up, there's nothing about curtains at all. Plus there's no ,there's to be a nice grill of wood or metal or something there. That's to safeguard the sanctity and dignity of the whole proceedings. Well now, There were many violations of that law after this instruction came out. And the Holy See then had to say to bishops, "Look, you'd better look after that, we didn't mean that to happen." [23.00] You see, It doesn't say anything here about sitting down in front of the priest and telling him your sins. It doesn't say that there. But everywhere they began to rip the confessionals apart, and put the seat there so you just sit down there and tell your confession. Now women are not allowed to do it that way. They may sit down, but there still must be the grill business you see. But it was, it was designed to show that there's a new way of going about it. But again, everybody had to be given the choice, see. And in some cases they were given no choice. I was shanghaied into a situation and didn't realise it until it was too late. But I was acting illegally. We were shanghaied into a school situation, we just sat in a big room and the girls all came down and sat down told us their sins, now that's wrong, you're not allowed to do that. Once, sometimes you forget what it says, and then somebody takes charge and says, "Look, you go there, you go there, you go there." And you say, "Aw well." [24.00] ... No not really, they should have confessionals, or something equivalent you see, there are many, there are many seats and other things with frameworks up. Now they should be used see. {someone else speaking: It happens, a church there's got a confessional, and a priest's chair and a wall or curtain. But there's a big back comes through there, and near to the door is just an open

space. So its just a sort of imaginary separation really.} Oh no it's a separation between the person here and the person there, it doesn't have to be a separation over to the other side of the wall. Oh there are all kinds of, obviously because of the problems that have been, that have occurred since then, they're bound to make this a little bit clearer perhaps in the new code of cannon law [25.00] { someone else says, why don't they turn around and make all the confessions backlog} No, no, no they won't do that. No the old ones are sometimes too draughty and dark, small. No they want to make it a place that's, that's to be used for a solemn public worship, you see. So the circumstances should make you realize that you are being reconciled to the holy church of God {someone else says a lot of them have got no rules} Well I've just told you they should be there.

{The Time for Reconciliation}

The time for it. The reconciliation of penitents may be celebrated on any time of any day. But it is desirable that the faithful know the day and the time at which the priest is available for this ministry. They should be encouraged to approach to approach the sacrament of penance at times when mass is not being celebrated. Now they still hear confessions hear during mass, the ... went out there for, see they shouldn't do that. And especially during the scheduled periods. The season of Lent is most appropriate for celebrating the sacrament of penance. Already on Ash Wednesday, the people have got, it's heard, a solemn invitation. Turn away from sin, [26.00] and believe the good news. It is therefore fitting to have several penitential celebrations during Lent, so that all the faithful may have an opportunity to be reconciled with God and their neighbour, and so be able to celebrate the pascal mystery in the Easter triduum with renewed hearts. Well that's and try and stop what's going on in some countries where they all flock during holy week to confession,

see. Well the thing gets completely out of focus. And they say, you should be going to confession long before holy week begins.

{The Vestments}

The Vestments. The regulations laid down by the local ordinaries for the use of liturgical vestments in the celebration of penance are to be observed. Well here in our country we were exempted from anything beyond a satand and a stole. But then in some countries it's more elaborate because it's a liturgical action. Now here's the ritual. The rite for the reconciliation of individual penitents. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven sections. [27.00] The first one is the preparation of the priest and the penitent. Second; welcoming the penitent. Three; reading the word of God. Four; confession and the act of sorrow. Five; the prayer of the penitent, for his sorrow and the absolution. Then the proclamation of praise. I mentioned it. And the dismissal. And then the short rite for all this. The preparation; Priest and penitent should first prepare themselves by prayer to celebrate the sacrament. The priest should call upon the Holy Spirit so that he may receive enlightenment and charity. They already mentioned that. The penitent should compare his life with the example and the commandments of Christ, and then pray to God for the forgiveness of his sins. Now I've never done that in all my life. Never thought of doing it. To compare my life with the example of Christ. We go through the commandments. But now this is the new, re-enriched [28.00] manner of celebrating. We are Christ's subjects. We are his brothers and his sisters. He is the embodiment of how the son of God and the sons of God are to live. So naturally I think golly. How have I been out of harmony with the way of living that he exemplifies and which he actually puts into words as the church explains them. See, so at the back of the book they show you what the testing of yourself should involve. It's much more elaborate then what it ever

was before. And very, very satisfying because it's based on the three great commandments of Christ; You are to love the Lord your God with all your heart. You are to love your neighbour as yourself. And whatever the third one is ... You are to, it means to love yourself ...[29.00] Is it the specimen before the examination, yes. To love the Lord with your whole heart, and then one, two, three, four, five, six paragraphs to test whether you do. Next one the Lord says love one another as I have loved you with one, two three, four ,five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve paragraphs to see whether you've done that. And Our Lord says be perfect as your father is perfect. That's about your own self. One, two, three, four, five, six sections so eighteen and six that's, there are twenty-four. [29.35]
[end of side 1]

[side 2] Faith as all systems go, at least they seem to be going. And we last time, went through quickly the examination of conscience, having done what? The first two modes of the sacrament of penance. Now we can finish this off rather quickly, and then I propose to do something just a little bit different, which will include reading something from the sermon on the mount. Something like what we're doing in scripture, we fit it in hear. So we come now to number thirty one in the introduction to the sacrament of reconciliation. And this is the rite for reconciliation of penitents with general confession and absolution. This is in emergencies, so what are the emergencies? This was prepared years ago, all this, and was held up for some years, because the other congregations, apart from this one this is the sacred congregation for divine worship. [1.00] had to examine the text, especially the congregation for the doctrine of the faith, to see whether it was in perfect harmony with the teaching of the faith. It took a lot of time to get it clear. And even now, it's being abused so the Holy See had to reprimand even bishops,

because they are using this method, the third method, when they shouldn't be. So what exactly is the emergency during which you can use this third method? Now maybe from what you heard before, everybody knows that when soldiers are going into battle, the priest can stand up and say, "Alright, you're all going into battle now in a quarter of an hour's time. There'd be a thousand then. Everybody here now? Be sorry for your sins. Say after me an act of contrition, or whatever, and I will absolve you, all those of you who are well disposed. So all your sins are forgiven now. If you, God forbid, are killed in the battle, then you can be at peace. If you are not, [2.00] then the obligation is still on you to go to the priest somewhere, and to tell him the sins for which you are now sorry, and which you are obliged to tell, but the church lifts that obligation for the time being." So everybody knew about that one, but what other instances are there? And that's what held the thing up for a while. Individual, integral confession and absolution. Integral means that you have to tell all the sins you are obliged to tell. That means you might have killed twenty people, but after ordinary care and ordinary careful examination you can only remember having killed fifteen people. You actually killed twenty. You go to father and say, "I've committed, I've done a few things wrong."

"What for instance?"

"well I didn't keep the commandments too well."

"Well the fifth commandment"

"What, were you getting angry?"

"Well I was actually"

[3.00] "Well, the guy died"

"Oh, so then just the one guy was it?"

“No, there were a number of them. There were fifteen of them.”

See, well now there were twenty. But he has not made what was called a materially integral confession, because there were actually twenty, but he's made a formally integral confession, because he could only remember fifteen. So he's forgiven the other five. If later on ... So he goes along to father and says, “ By the way I've mentioned that I've killed fifteen people, but there was a sixteenth. Well if he remembered the seventeenth he'd have to tell that. And eighteenth. See the difference? That's what they mean when they speak of an integral confession. You'd have to say what comes to your mind as being of obligation to say. That's why you don't have to worry about things that you have forgotten. {Someone else ... } Then it's another sin. [4.00] He's failing now in the formal integrity of the confession. He's forgiven, but he's always forgiven on the basis that it's been told to the church, that is, when the obligation to tell it impinges on your conscience. So it has, so he has. So it's sinful not to. Integral and individual confession and absolution remain the only ordinary way for the faithful to reconcile themselves with God and the church, unless physical or moral impossibility excuses from this kind of confession. You see, for example you could be in a hospital bed, and the fellow next to you, he might have been a terrible sinner. And no matter what you do if you speak out, the man next to you is going to hear it, the confessor says, well you don't have to say it, just say father I'm sorry for all my sins, and I'll say very good, I'll forgive you. You don't have to say them, because the other guy will hear them. It's a moral impossibility. The church never puts anybody to any trouble in that way. [5.00] Particular occasional circumstances may render lawful and even necessary to give general absolution to a number of penitents without their previous individual confession. In addition to cases involving the danger of death it is lawful to give

general absolution to several of the faithful at the same time, only after they have made a generic confession, it is “I confess to almighty God ...” in a general framework, but have been suitably called to repentance, if there is a grave need. Mainly, to make it plain, when in view of the number of penitents, sufficient confessors are not available to hear individual confession properly within a suitable period of time. So that the penitents would, through no fault of their own, have to go without sacramental grace or holy communion for a long time. This may happen, ... it may happen especially in mission territories, but in other places as well. [6.00] And also in groups of persons when the need is established. General absolution is not lawful when confessors are available for the sole reason of the large number of penitents as may be on the occasion of some major feast or pilgrimage. Just the mere fact that you have a number of people that doesn’t mean anything, as long as you have enough priests and all that. {someone else speaking} Yes, that’s right ... All those in mortal sin over to this father here ... So what was happening in Britain was that a bishop here and there got up and said, “Look, we’ll make an announcement. I know lots of people in this city that haven’t been to church in years, but next Friday, you can all come to the cathedral, no matter what you’ve been doing, and I’ll absolve the lot of you. Then you can’t even go to confession during the holy season.” You’re not allowed to do that. There you are contriving the situation. [7.02] The judgement about the presence of the above conditions, and the decision concerning the lawfulness of giving general sacramental absolution are reserved not to the parish priest but to the bishop of the diocese, who is to consult with the other members of the episcopal conference. So a bishop can’t decide it even on his own back, he has to consult brother bishops in the episcopal conference. So you can see in South America and these places, they say, “well look. When we have Sunday mass anywhere,

he's got enormous powers. There's no potent Christendom ... So you think that the church has netted flies there and they have to put their mitres on and think and give him advice and he makes a decision. Over and above the cases determined by the diocesan bishop, if any other serious need arises for giving general sacramental absolution to several persons together. The priest must have recourse [8.01] to the local ordinary beforehand if this is possible, if he is to give absolution lawfully. Otherwise he should inform the ordinary, that's the bishop, as soon as possible of the need and of the absolution which he gave. The church controls the sacrament. In order that the faithful may profit from sacramental absolution given to several persons at the same time, it is absolutely necessary that they be properly disposed. Well, the church even caters for the pretty dum you see. ... be disposed otherwise nothing happens. Each one should be sorry for his sins and resolve to avoid committing them again. He should intend to repair any scandal and harm he may have caused. And likewise resolve to confess in due time each of the grave sins which he cannot confess at present. This dispositions and conditions which are required for the validity of the sacrament should be carefully recalled to the faithful by priests. You might ... so the priest should stand up and say, "Here are the conditions ... [9.00] its common sense but here they are so that we can do them quite deliberately. Those who receive pardon for grave sins by a common absolution should go to individual confession before they receive this kind of absolution again, unless they are impeded by a just reason. Well the church envisages it happening about several times. Something happens in some countries and says," Well, as far as possible you must go to the individual confession in-between these, unless you are impeded by a just reason. Now a just reason is distinct from a serious reason, they're

two types of reason the church gives. So there's a frivolous reason, a just reason and then a serious reason. They are strictly bound unless this is morally impossible to go to confession within a year. The precept which applies to each of the faithful confess at least once a year to a priest all the grave sins which he has not individually confessed before also remains in force in this case too. [10.00] Some people think that always you must go to confession once a year, no, no. You must go to the sacrament of penance once a year, if you have committed any mortal sins. If you haven't committed any mortal sins you don't have to go to confession. That is, you should go to confession regularly, you should. What it means is you should go regularly to confession. That's only if you are such a bad catholic, that you can't be bothered ever going to confession. You ought to know this; that if you don't go during the Easter period, when the Lord's death and resurrection are being celebrated with great solemnity. If you don't go then, you've committed another mortal sin. Doesn't mean that's the way you should act at all, it just lays down the law that if you go as far as that, that you can't be bothered going to confession at all, when you've committed mortal sins. If you don't confess at that time, that's another mortal sin. You have to recall some people because they're a bit dum. [11.00] {Another person speaking} Oh well, she's wrong. Not necessary, no ,not necessary ... No she's not committing a sin by that. But she should go, the way of living the church. So the reconciliation of Penitents by general confession and absolution in the cases provided by law, everything takes place as described above for the reconciliation of several penitents with individual confession and absolution with the following exceptions; A, B, C and D; After the homily or during it, the faithful who seek general absolution should be instructed to dispose themselves properly; that is, each one should be sorry for his sins, and resolve to avoid committing them again. He should intend to

repair any scandal and harm he may have caused, and likewise resolve to confess a new time each one of the grave sins which cannot be confessed at present. Some acts of penance should be proposed for all, individuals may add to this penance if they wish. [12.00] The priest would have to say something pretty general like “everybody should, ... “ He could say, “If you think you deserve a much bigger penance; the church says you may add to that penance and it will be an ecclesial one I suppose.” The deacon, another minister or the priest then calls upon the penitent to receive absolution to show their intention by some sign, for example, by bowing their heads, kneeling, or giving other, some other sign given by the episcopal conferences. They should also say together a form of general absolution, for example, the I confess to almighty God, which may be followed by a litany or a penitential song. Then the Lord’s prayer is sung or is said by all as indicated above. See, then the priest calls upon the grace of the Holy Spirit for the forgiveness of sins. Proclaims the victory over sin of Christ’s death and resurrection and gives the sacramental absolution to the penitents. And finally the priest invites the people to give thanks as prescribed above, and committing with the concluding prayer he immediately blesses and dismisses them. [13.03] Now what about celebrations? We’re at section four now. The penitential celebrations that are being spoken about are gatherings of the people of God to hear the proclamation of God’s words, this invites them to conversion and renewal of Life. And announces our freedom from sin, through the death and resurrection of Christ. Instructably says that this is the same as that usually followed in the celebrations of God’s work and given in this rite. It is appropriate therefore that after the introductory rites; song, reading, prayer, one or more biblical reading may be chosen song, psalm or period or silence in the homily. All this to be explained and defined, before or after the readings from scripture, the reading

from the fathers or other writers may be selected which will help the community and each person through a true awareness of sin and heartfelt sorrow, in other words, to bring about a conversion of life. So there's an interesting thing you can read out something from Ronald Knox or Cardinal Newman or anybody that perhaps grips our attention [14.01] ... It's well written. After the homily and reflection on God's word it's desirable that congregation united in voice and spirit pray together in a litany or in some other way suited for general participation, the lord's prayer again. And the priest or the minister concludes with a prayer and a dismissal. Care should be taken that the faithful do not confuse these celebrations with the celebrations of the sacrament of penance. Penitential celebrations are very helpful in promoting conversion of life and purification of heart. And it is desirable to arrange such services especially for these purposes; One, two, three, four, to foster the spirit of penance within the community. Two; to help the faithful to prepare for confession, which can be made individually later at a convenient time. To help children gradually to form their conscience about sin and human life and about freedom from sin, through Christ. And to help catechumens and their conversion. Penitential celebrations, moreover, are very useful in places where no priest is available to give sacramental absolution [15.02] They offer help in reaching that perfect contrition which comes from charity. And enables the faithful to obtain to God's grace through a desire for the sacrament. Adaptations could be made, no need for me to read those through But the priest's adaptation might interest you. It is the priest and especially parish priests in reconciling individuals or the community to a depth, to a right to the concrete circumstances. The essential structure and the entire form of absolution must be kept up. If necessary they may omit some parts of the parcel for some reason, or they can make them longer. They may select a text of readings

and prayers, choose a place more suitable for the celebration according to the regulations of the episcopal conference, so it may be richer and more fruitful. And they can propose and prepare occasional celebrations during the year and during Lent, and they can be adapted to the conditions of the community; children, sick people and others. And may be assisted by other people in the freedom of our (head). And they may decide to give [16.00] general sacramental absolution proceeded by only a generic confession when a grave necessity not foreseen by the diocesan bishop arises, and when recourse to them is not possible. They're obliged to notify him as soon as possible of the need and then the absolution given. Well that's the conclusion of the great introduction to the new sacrament of penance. ... Oh well, that's all covered by the church's law already, see they don't cover all those moral questions. These are the sacramental things. In moral theology, all the questions concerning those obligations are dealt with [17.00] see. The obligation by ecclesiastical law is, no by defined law is, you must confess all your mortal sins. And then by ecclesiastical law, you must confess mortal sins before going to communion. But then there are exceptions made, different instances ... The moral theology book. So all contingencies are allowed for {another person speaking} My word it does ... yes ... yes, that's quite right ... I learnt that from a priest in Rome who asked penitents to do something for a purpose. And so I was hearing confessions in Rome one day, and I said to a man, because he was in the [18.00] newspapers, there was a lot of Italian prisoners of war were coming back from Russia. And I said, "would you say whatever I told you to," and I said, "say it for these prisoners who were coming." He nearly broke into tears, he said, "My son is still there." Now what I thought I'd do was to read some material from a book that we're doing in our scripture course, on the sermon on the mount, because the examination of conscience to a large

extent as you can see, is based on what Our Lord said on the sermon on the mount. Be perfect as your heavenly father is perfect. You are to love others as I have loved you. And you are to love the Lord your God with your whole heart and soul. And the sermon on the mountain, the king and the son, the son of God, who is the king's son and therefore he's the king too, is telling the new human race via the apostles and those people there who are beginning to associate themselves with him and his apostles, how you live now [19.00] in the kingdom of God as his sons and as royal sons of God. That is as human beings who are already the images of God by creation, and now in the kingdom, are made new. So as Moses in the old law received from God great structural statements, commandments; You shall do this and you shall not do that. Plus a great detailed body of activity to be avoided or activity to be carried out. So Our Lord, you see, carrying on from Moses, gives the major statements about how to live, and then fills it out with detail. And then the examination of conscience is obviously based on it Now you can ... I don't blame you [20.00] Yes, very much, and I suppose you could say three things about it; At the heart of it is the divine power. See the king is a powerful person. So the kingdom of God means God acting with power. Well you might say God acts with power all the time. So it means God acting with final power that he's eternally used to transform the whole thing that he has made. Therefore the kingdom of God means the last day. What happens on the last day? When God will have fully exercised all his power in everybody and everything in us; to purify us, and to bring us to the fulfilment of royal sons of God. And the universe to transfigure it. And then his constraining power will be fully exercised, and the damned will be held in eternal confinement, barracks, barracks of fire. Top security, no more problems. The marvel is that that has begun. God has begun to exercise his final power. But we always think of the kingdom as a

people in the country. [21.00] And that of course is very important here too. This is recognisable. And the Catholic Church is that kingdom of God begun. And Our Lord said, everybody must get ready by repentance. And must believe the good news of the kingdom of God (bought) yet is near. Our Lord inaugurated the church in a complex way or a multiple way, not dissimilar to the way we are formed. So there was a preparatory conception and embryonic stage of the church. Then it was born and made and fashioned, and then finally it was manifested and commissioned. But the moment at which it was all brought into its full existence was the sacrifice of himself, beginning at the last supper and winding up on the cross. That's when the kingdom of God [22.00] came in. So that is we often say that all grace depends on Our Lord's death. Or that he atoned for all sins. It means that the divine power to carry out all that's been arranged. It was all brought in by what Our Lord did on the cross. And that's when the kingdom of God begun. So the kingdom is power but exercised in a visible fashion, and that the church is that kingdom. The next point is that it must always be seen in contrast with opposition. God's opposite number is Satan. But God wants the human race to destroy Satanic power. So he gives the human race a king which is his own son, a man. So Our Lord inaugurates the kingdom of God his father by disestablishing the reign of Satan. So the three ideas would be; the power, public nature of [23.00] and the opposition to. Those always come in. So as soon as you hear the kingdom of God you instantly think of the opposition. You think of the people, and you think of the power being exercised. I suppose you could add a fourth thing, it's almost That power is exercised through the word of God. So to receive the kingdom meant, that you listened to what Christ said, and you absolutely believe it. And then, his words come into you mind charged with divine power, and they bring about the activity of faith, on which hope is built and

charity. And you are now in that kingdom. You have received the kingdom or kingly power through the words, do you get an idea? [24.00] Really the pope, pope Paul the sixth said that was what the whole thing was all about. The good news, evangelism, is the kingdom, but always of course associated with the king, Christ the Lord. So he's the good news. He is the kingdom if you like. There is the divine power ready for man, all locked up in heaven. Once he's crucified, as it were, surges out of him, and is communicated to the human race. In fact, of course, it is communicated from the moment Adam arrived, I mean from the moment Adam sinned. That divine power, it must be unleashed through Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit, was available for Adam the moment he sinned. But the public manifestation of its final stage is only the church. In other words, while divine power was operative in Israel, [25.00] Israel wasn't really the kingdom of God. It was a preliminary stage for it. But the Catholic Church is the kingdom of God, it's not a preliminary stage at all, it isn't. But it's, it is it unfolding. It said in the council documents, to be ingeminate. So acaciar ex renumay ingerminay etes, whatever the Latin word for first fruits is, I forget the word. The first, the first real manifestation of the kingdom of God is the church, that's it. Not the temporal order, but you see the two are highly linked, because human beings in the kingdom of God, that is, as subject to the divine word, God speaking to them. A word that's charged with power, that changes them. Eventually brings them into a state of grace and everything. That's the kingdom alright. But those men then have to set up a temporal order that reflects it [26.02] But that's why the human race or the human temporal order must be a placed that is suitable for fraternal charity. Because the kingdom of God means that all men are parterres, brothers. They are to be sons of God, the royal sons of God together. And this world must be set up in such a way as to facilitate that ... manner, if it isn't ... So everything on Earth,

on the last day, that isn't in harmony with this new brotherhood, will be destroyed. Everything else will be transfigured. What that means, we're not quite sure. And then the whole place will feel this power of God, utterly and completely and will be the kingdom of God. You see there are traps for young players in all that. But that's the basic concept. [27.00] In other words, it's a conflict mission on Earth. Our Lord comes as an envoy. But he comes rather as an envoy as General MacArthur was an envoy. He General MacArthur or any great general is commissioned by the king to carry out a mission, a great combat mission. And that's what Our Lord had to do in Israel. So he's setting up or going to set up a kingdom, but first he has to say, "I hope everybody is aware that what's been promised is now about to happen, the kingdom is about to be launched and inaugurated in this land." And by and large they said, "Well, we don't, we don't agree." He said, "You'd better agree. You'd better agree, because if you don't, the kingdom will be taken away from here, and given to the pagans," that means to Rome. The kingdom of God is centred now in Rome. [28.02] Not in Jerusalem. But you see, the church is the new Jerusalem. It is the new Temple. Again you see, there are aspects of it that call for very careful utterance and the members of the church are always liable to reduce that combat mission analogy or comparison, they're liable to reduce it to actuality, to say that it is a real combat mission. We have to use force against the multinationals and the capitalist oppressors of the down trodden peasants and poor in South America and everywhere else. Our Lord said, "Well, that's exact thing I warned the Jewish people about. They were not to use force and violence against the Roman overlords. That wasn't the kingdom but they thought it was. I told them they were wrong, but if they continued on like that, they'd bring down destruction, [29.02] fire and sword on their cities, and that's what happened." And the same thing will happen to us, ... It's related to the kingdom, the social

order should be apple pie. Everybody should be in his own place, so in the fourteenth century, Our Lord the king, sent a message through Saint Michael the archangel, to the girl Joan and said, "Take up arms Joan, and put the English out of France, and see that the prince is crowned at Rheims, that the English will be back in England and the French in France and you'll have peace again. So Joan got up and said to the English king, "Go home. This is not your home, this is our home. Go home there, you'll be content, we'll be ... [End of side 2]